

# FROME RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

## Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health FOR THE YEAR 1920.

GENTLEMEN,—

I beg to submit the following Report on the Public Health and Sanitary Administration of the Frome Rural District for the year ending December 31st, 1920.

### Natural and Social Conditions of the District.

**Physical Features.**—The District, comprising an area of 51,448 acres, consisting mainly of grass land, well wooded, lying upon a subsoil of sandstone, limestone, or clay. The eastern end of the Mendip Range of hills extends into the District; and in this part are situated the coal mines, in the Parishes of Mells, Kilmersdon, Writhlington, and Foxcote.

**Social Condition.**—The chief occupations of the inhabitants are agriculture, production of milk and cheese, coal mining, and stone quarries. No occupation carried on in the District has any detrimental effect upon the public health. The amount of Poor Law Out-Relief for the half-year ending Michaelmas, 1920, was 3/9 per head of population.

The Victoria Hospital, Frome, received 18 cases from the District during 1920; these were patients who were able to pay a certain weekly sum towards their expenses. For those who are unable to pay Hospital charges, the Frome Poor-Law Infirmary is available. The number of cases from the District treated here during 1920 was 41, distributed as follows:—

No. I. Sub-District—					No. II. Sub-District—				
Beckington	...	...	..	2	Kilmersdon	...	...	...	8
Berkley	...	...	...	3	Writhlington	...	...	...	1
Buckland	...	...	...	5	Hemington	...	...	...	4
Nunney	...	...	...	4	Leigh-on-Mendip	...	...	...	1
Rodden	...	...	...	1	Mells	...	...	...	6
Rode	...	...	...	1	Laverton	...	...	...	1
Selwood	...	...	...	1	Norton St. Philip	...	...	...	2
Whatley	...	...	...	1					
				18					23

### Vital Statistics.

**The Birth Rate.**—The number of Births registered during the year was 238—122 boys and 116 girls. This gives a Rate per 1000 population of 22·2. The number of Registered Births, and also the Birth Rate, are very much higher (almost 50 %) than last year, and indeed than any year since the war.

The Birth Rate per 1000 population for the last six years, was as follows:—

1920.		1919.		1918.		1917.		1916.		1915.
22·2	...	15·9	...	14·2	...	12·76	...	19·6	...	19·1

The Rate has not yet reached that for England and Wales, which for 1920 is 25·4.

**The Infant Mortality,** that is, Deaths under 1 year of age, is 15. This is slightly higher than the last two years, but lower than in 1918, when the number was 18.

The Rate per 1000 Births registered for the last six years, were as follows:—

1920.	1919.	1918.	1917.	1916.	1915.					
63·02	...	53·8	...	78·01	...	127·65	...	52·2	...	61·6

The Rate for England and Wales for 1920, is 80.



**The Causes of Death** under 1 year of age were as follows :—

Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	1
Broncho-Pneumonia	...	...	...	...	...	1
Diarrhoea	...	...	...	...	...	2
Peritonitis	...	...	...	...	...	1
Convulsions	...	...	...	...	...	2
Marasmus	...	...	...	...	...	1
Congenital Debility and Malformations	...	...	...	...	...	3
Premature Birth	...	...	...	...	...	4 (2 were twins)
						<hr/> 15

These Deaths, while slightly more than last year, were from a large number of different causes, and call for no special remark.

Deaths under 1 year analyzed :—

One to seven days	...	...	...	...	5
One to four weeks	.	...	...	...	2
One to six months	...	...	...	...	6
Six to twelve months	...	...	...	...	2
					<hr/> 15

**The Death Rate.**—The number of Deaths registered in 1920 was 108. The number corrected for inward and outward transfers=124 ; consisting of 63 males and 61 females. This number is about 40 less than last year. This gives a Death Rate (after correction for transfers) of 11·5 per 1000 living—the lowest since 1914.

The Death Rate for the last six years was as follows :—

1920.	1919.	1918.	1917.	1916.	1915.
11·5	... 15·7	... 13·8	... 12·76	... 15·4	... 14·4

The Death Rate for England and Wales for 1920, was 12·4 ; and for 1919, 13·8.

**The Ages** at which Death occurred were as follows :—

Under 1 year	...	..	...	...	...	15
1 and under 2 years	...	...	...	...	...	1
2     "     5	...	...	...	...	...	3
5     "     15	...	...	...	...	...	3
15     "     25	...	...	...	...	...	0
25     "     45	...	...	...	...	...	7
45     "     65	...	...	...	...	...	22
65 and upwards	...	...	...	...	...	73
						<hr/> 124

**Registered Deaths** classified according to cause :—

Influenza	...	...	...	...	3
Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Phthisis)	...	...	...	...	1
Cancer and Malignant Disease	...	...	...	...	14
Organic Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	28
Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	7
Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	7
Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	4
Diarrhoea and Enteritis	...	...	...	...	2
Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	1
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	...	...	...	...	3
Parturition (apart from Puerperal Fever)...	...	...	...	...	1
Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, etc.	...	...	...	...	6
Suicide	...	...	...	...	1
Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	...	46
					<hr/> 124



**Remarks on Death Rate.**—The number of Deaths registered, as I have said, is about 40 less than last year, while the Death Rate is the lowest since 1914 ; and is lower also than the general Rate for England and Wales. The Deaths from Infectious Diseases were very few indeed—there being only three from Influenza, as against 16 last year ; none from Diphtheria or Scarlet Fever ; and only one from Phthisis ; while last year there were five from Phthisis, and one from General Tuberculosis. The main causes of Death are Heart Disease, 28 ; and Cancer, 14 ; the latter again, however, is two less than in 1919.

## Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

**Water.**—There are seven Water Supplies in the District, which are under the control of the Council, and are all derived from springs. These are situated in (1) Nunney (including Trudoxhill and Marston) ; (2) Wanstrow ; (3) Buckland ; (4) Coleford ; (5) Leigh-on-Mendip ; (6) Vobster ; (7) Hemington.

In addition there are two Districts—Rodden and Selwood—supplied from the Frome Urban ; and two—Kilmersdon and Writhlington—from the Radstock mains. The rest of the District is supplied partly from springs and partly from wells.

The Mells Water Supply is, at present, a private supply belonging to Sir John Horner, and is derived from a spring about a mile from the village. The supply, not being sufficient for the needs of the village, the Council prepared and adopted a scheme for taking over the spring and present supply pipes, and constructing a reservoir capable of holding a two-days' supply, and further supply pipes, etc. This has been submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval, and application made for power to borrow the necessary money. The Ministry sent a Representative down to enquire and report on the scheme at the end of the year, and the matter is not yet settled.

**Quantity and Quality.**—The quantity of water from all Public Supplies has proved sufficient during the year. The supply is constant, and the quality is good.

**Water Analysis.**—Twelve samples of water, from five different sources, were examined during the year ; nine by myself, and three by the Bacteriologist of the County Health Laboratory. The results were as follows—

- 1—Mells Water Supply—Bacteriological and Chemical analysis—both good.
- 2—Well at Norton St. Philip—Three Bacteriological and Chemical analysis—two bad, the third good.
- 3—Public Pump, Norton St. Philip—bad.  
Spring supplying same—good. Pipes connecting to be taken up and cleaned.
- 4—Well, Lodge Hill, Rodden—two analysis, both bad—well to be closed.
- 5—Spring and Well at Laverton Rectory—three analysis ; the first bad, the second and third—after the cistern and pipes had been cleaned out—were good.

**Rivers and Streams.**—There were no cases of pollution during the year.

**Drainage and Sewerage.**—There are Sewerage Systems in the Parishes of Nunney, Beckington, Rode, and Writhlington. These consist of pipe drains, generally discharging into settling tanks or pits before going into the streams, or being distributed over the land by irrigation.

**Closet Accommodation.**—This is sufficient, but there is no record of the number of each kind of closet. Water closets are used wherever there is a water supply laid on to the house. All closets are examined frequently during sanitary and housing inspections, and it is seen that they are kept in good condition.

**Scavenging.**—Public Scavenging is carried out in Coleford, which is the only part of the District where this is needed. This is done in a satisfactory manner.

**Character and Efficiency of Arrangements** for the removal and disposal of house refuse, and cleansing of earth closets, privies, cesspools, and ash pits. Apart from the public scavenging at Coleford, the cleaning of ash pits, privies, etc., is done by the occupiers of houses. The efficiency of this is seen to by the Sanitary Inspectors during their visits to the houses.

### Sanitary Inspection of District.—Sub-District No. I.—

Number of Premises visited ...	...	...	...	375
Number of Defects or Nuisances discovered	...	...	...	11
as follows :—Blocked or Defective Drains	...	...	...	4
Absence of Drains	...	...	...	2
Dirty Houses...	...	...	...	1
Defective Floors	...	...	...	1
Defective Roofs and Damp Walls	...	...	...	2
Nuisance from Pigs	...	...	...	1
				<hr/>
				11
				<hr/>

All these were remedied by the end of the year.





Sub-District No. II.—

Number of Premises visited ...	...	...	...	400
Number of Defects or Nuisances discovered ...	...	...	...	66
as follows :—Defective Wells ...	...	...	...	4
Defective Drains ...	...	...	...	17
Defective Cesspools ...	...	...	...	1
Accumulation of Refuse ...	...	...	...	2
Defective Windows ...	...	...	...	6
Defective Floors ...	...	...	...	7
Defective Shutting, etc. ...	...	...	...	3
Defective Roofs ...	...	...	...	20
Damp Cottages ...	...	...	...	6
				<hr/> 66 <hr/>

All these were remedied during the year with the exception of two or three left over until next year.

**Schools.**—The Sanitary condition of all Schools in the District is good. The water supply is adequate, and in good order.

In dealing with the health of the Scholars and preventing the spread of Infectious Diseases, the Reports sent to the Medical Officer of Health by the Head Teachers of cases of Infectious Disease—whether notifiable or unnotifiable—are of great value. In the case of dangerous Infectious Disease, besides the patient (if a child) all children living in the same house are excluded from School until danger from carrying infection is over. Any “carrier” cases discovered in the Schools are excluded and dealt with. It being suspected that such a case existed in Rode, swabs were taken from the whole School, and one “carrier” of Diphtheria was discovered, and promptly isolated.

The following Schools were closed during the year on account of the prevalence of Infectious Diseases, and consequent disorganisation of the work of the School :—

For Measles—Berkley—from July 1st to July 22nd.

For Whooping Cough—Witham Friary—from Oct. 30th to Nov. 27th.

It will be seen from the above that the Schools were exceptionally free from Infectious Diseases during the year. Last year 14 Schools were closed, most of them for Influenza. Nine cases of Whooping Cough occurred in Kilmersdon School and were excluded, but the disease did not spread, and it was not necessary to close the School.

## Food.

**Milk Supply.**—There are about 306 Licenses in force in the District, including six new Licenses (five in No. I. Sub-District, and one in No. II. Sub-District) issued during the year. All the old Licenses were renewed. The Dairies, Cowsheds, etc., have been frequently inspected, and the sanitary condition of the premises is satisfactory. In two cases Nuisances were reported, which were promptly abated.

There are three **Milk Depots** in the District :—

- 1—Wanstrow, where Milk is pasteurised and cooled ; Cheese was made for a short time, but discontinued.
- 2—Staplemead, in the Parish of Berkley, where Milk is pasteurised ; Condensed Milk is made ; and also Butter and Cheese made.
- 3—Norton St. Philip, Milk is pasteurised, and Cheese and Butter made.

These Depots have been frequently visited and inspected. There were nuisances from whey at Wanstrow and Norton St. Philip. In both cases the nuisances have been abated.

I was notified on several occasions during the year by the Health Authorities of Bermondsey, Liverpool, and Port of London, of consignments of unsound Condensed Milk—amounting in all to 2952 cases and some odd tins—sent to Staplemead Dairy. The worst consignments were to be used for pig feeding only ; the better class were allowed to be re-sterilized and used for making Confectionery and Cheese. Your Inspector kept watch over all these consignments and saw that they were used only in the manner directed. I do not like the idea of consigning such large quantities of unsound food material into our District, even if used only for pig feeding. If the custom is to be allowed at all, it will entail most careful supervision on the part of your Inspector.

**Meat.**—There are 10 Slaughter Houses in the District—five in each Sub-District—including one new one licensed in Nunney. There are also two Knacker’s Yards, both in No. 1 Sub-District. The Licenses for these have all been renewed. The premises have been frequently inspected, regularly whitewashed, and kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

**Meat Inspections.**—There was only one meat inspection during the year ; this was in No. 1 Sub-District. In this case the carcase, badly infected with tuberculosis, was condemned, and buried in my presence.

**Bakehouses.**—There are 12 of these ; nine in No. I., and three in No. II. Sub-Districts. They are all clean, and in good sanitary condition. No defects or nuisances have been reported during the year.





**Factories, Workshops, and Workplaces.**—There are 37 in the District. The Factories include three Milk Factories, five Flour Mills, two Brush and Handle Factories, one Handle Works and Saw Mill, one Motor Works, and one Saddlery Works. The Workshops and Workplaces include 12 Workshop Bakehouses, two Workshop Laundries, and 10 Wheelwrights and Wagon Works. These premises have all been inspected by the Inspectors of Nuisances. No defects have been reported. The sanitary accommodation is sufficient and in good order.

There are no Out-Workers in the District ; the few engaged in Glove Making having either left the District or given up the work.

## Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious Diseases.

**Infectious Diseases Generally.**—The number of Notifiable Diseases reported during the year was 74. The number for 1919 was 111 ; but this number included 49 cases of Measles and German Measles, which are no longer notifiable. Deducting these, the figure for 1919 would be 62, showing an increase of 14 this year. This increase is due to the larger number of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever cases, which were very few in 1919. There were five notifications of Malaria, all contracted abroad while serving in the Army. All these have been under medical treatment, and are now free from the disease. There were 19 cases of Acute Primary Pneumonia, with seven deaths ; and six of Influenzal Pneumonia, with three deaths.

Pneumonia cases are divided into “Primary,” *i.e.*, unconnected with any other disease ; and “Secondary,” *i.e.*, cases occurring as complications of other diseases. The latter class are especially common and fatal in the course of Measles, Whooping Cough, and Influenza. Only the Primary class are notifiable, with the one exception of Influenzal cases, where Pneumonia is the usual cause of death. All Pneumonias are caused by certain micro-organisms, and are infectious ; the infection being spread by the sputum and the breath. It is important, therefore, that such cases should be treated in a separate bedroom ; or, if that be not possible, at least in a separate bed screened from others. It is very important also, that there should be abundance of fresh air and sunlight. No special disinfection by fumigation or spray is required after the case is over, but the sputum and discharges from nose should be burned or destroyed.

There were no notifications of Dysentery, Trench Fever, Ophthalmia Neonatorum, or Encephalitis Lethargica.

**Small Pox.**—There were no cases notified, but the possibility of the Disease being introduced into the District was emphasized by the receipt of a Report from the Port Medical Officer of Southampton, at the beginning of May, of a Small Pox Contact from a steamer proceeding to this District ; and a second Report from the Ministry of Health, of another Contact. These two cases were only in the District for a short time, and had been already re-vaccinated, and no case developed. Should however, infection actually be introduced, it would in all probability spread and cause an epidemic, owing to the number of children unprotected by vaccination. There are altogether too many children who get exemption from vaccination every year on account of so-called “conscientious objections” by their parents.

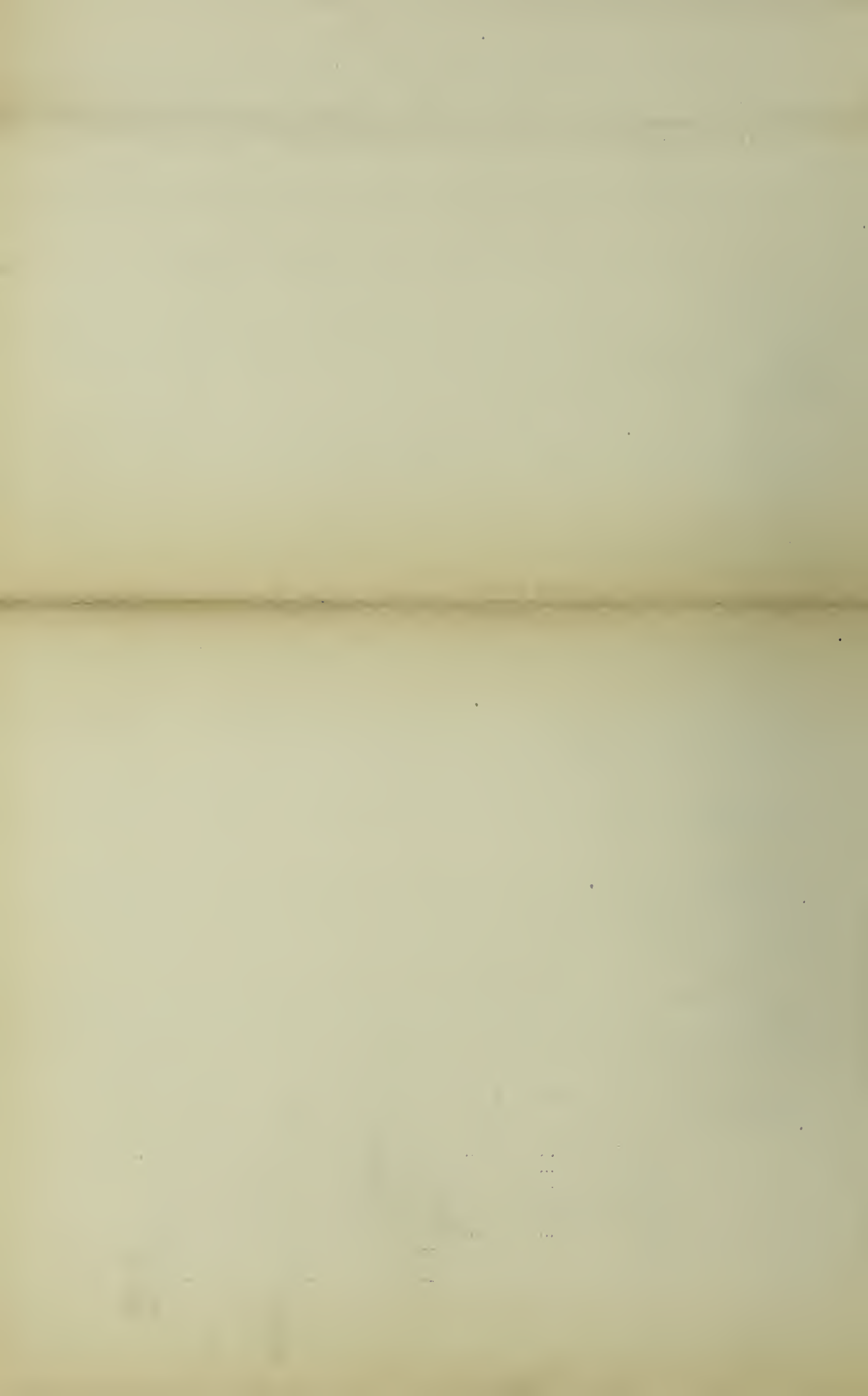
**Influenza** was not epidemic in the District this year, and the number of sporadic cases was small. There were only three deaths from this cause, while last year there were 18. The number of cases of Influenzal Pneumonia notified was six.

**Diphtheria.**—There were 17 cases notified, pretty widely distributed over the District ; they were mostly of a mild character, while all of them received anti-toxin early ; consequently, there were no deaths. Last year, out of seven cases, there were two deaths, neither of whom received any anti-toxin. Six of these cases were removed to Coleford Isolation Hospital, and three to Frome Urban Isolation Hospital. Besides these actual cases of Diphtheria, two “carrier” cases were treated in Coleford Hospital ; the other cases were isolated at home. In seven cases the infection was caused by “carriers ;” in the other cases the source could not be traced.

**Scarlet Fever.**—There were seven cases notified, all of a mild type, and all recovered without complications. One case was treated in Coleford Isolation Hospital, as it was impossible to isolate it at home ; the rest were isolated at home. In no case did a contact case develop from any of these. The cases were sporadic ones ; and in almost every instance, the source of infection was traced to cases in Schools in neighbouring Districts, with which the patients had been in contact.

**The Infectious Diseases notified during the year** (leaving out for the present Tuberculosis) are classified as follows :—

Disease.	No. notified.	Deaths.	Removed to Hospital.
Diphtheria ...	17	0	9
Scarlet Fever ...	7	0	1
Erysipelas ...	4	0	0
Acute Primary Pneumonia ...	19	7	0
Influenzal Pneumonia ...	6	3	0
Malaria ...	5	0	0
	<hr/> 58	<hr/> 10	<hr/> 10



The following Table will show the distribution of the cases :—

Sub-District No. I.—

	Diphtheria.	Scarlet Fever.	Erysipelas.	Acute Primary Pneumonia.	Influenzal Pneumonia.	Malaria.
Blatchbridge ...	3	0	0	0	0	0
West Woodlands ...	0	0	1	0	0	0
Critchill ...	0	0	0	0	1	0
Ridgeway (Nunney) ...	0	0	1	0	0	0
Nunney ...	0	0	0	3	0	3
Wanstrow ...	0	0	0	1	0	0
Witham Hall ...	3	0	0	0	0	0
Buckland ...	0	0	1	0	0	1
Chantry ...	0	0	0	1	0	0
Staplehead (Berkley) ...	1	0	0	0	0	0
Beckington ...	4	0	0	0	0	0
Rode ...	0	0	0	3	2	0

Sub-District No. II.—

Kilmersdon ...	0	0	0	1	0	0
Kilmersdon Common	0	2	0	0	0	0
Coleford ...	3	0	0	3	2	0
Haydon ...	0	2	0	1	0	0
Lipyeat ...	1	0	0	1	0	0
Highbury ...	0	0	1	0	0	0
Charlton ...	0	0	0	1	0	0
Writhlington ...	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hemington ...	0	1	0	0	0	0
Falkland ...	1	1	0	0	0	0
Woolverton ...	1	0	0	0	0	0
Leigh-on-Mendip ...	0	0	0	2	1	0
Upper Vobster ...	0	0	0	1	0	0
Norton St. Philip ...	0	0	0	1	0	1
	17	7	4	19	6	5

**Tuberculosis.**—The number of cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (Phthisis) notified was 15, and one case of Tubercular Glands in the neck. There was only one death from Phthisis during the year.

The requirements as to Notification of Tuberculosis have been very thoroughly observed by the Medical Practitioners of the District, and there are no unnotified cases in existence. The number of notified cases still resident in the District at the end of the year was (1)—Pulmonary cases, 26 ; (2)—Non-Pulmonary, 1.

The Medical Inspection of School Children has been of great value in detecting early cases at the period when they are most readily cured.

There seems to have been a steady decrease in cases of Phthisis in the District during the last few years as the following figures will show.

Number of cases of Phthisis notified :—

1917.	1918.	1919.	1920.
32	22	17	15

The cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis were distributed as follows :—

Sub-District No. I.—				Sub-District No. II.—			
Beckington ...	...	...	2	Kilmersdon ...	...	...	1
Rode ...	...	...	1	Haydon ...	...	...	1
Great Elm ..	...	...	1	Lipyeat ...	...	...	1
Marston Biggot	...	...	1	Writhlington ...	...	...	3
West Woodlands	...	...	2	Leigh-on-Mendip	...	...	1
				Norton St. Philip	...	...	1
			7				8

## Non-Notifiable Infectious Diseases.

**Measles.**—There were very few cases in the District during the year. With the exception of three solitary cases in three different villages, Berkley was the only place where there was any outbreak ; here the School had to be closed ; the cases were all light, with no complications. The source of infection was not traced.





**Whooping Cough.**—One School, Witham Friary, had to be closed on this account. The infection was introduced by one child coming into the village on a visit from an infected house. There were several young children in the family where this child visited, they caught the disease and introduced it into the School before it was discovered. Fortunately there were no deaths.

**Arrangements for Isolation and Disinfection.**—When notified of serious Infectious Diseases, I have immediately visited the case, and in conjunction with your Sanitary Inspectors, have made all necessary arrangements for isolation, either at home or in hospital. Your Inspectors visit the cases at intervals during their progress, and see that my instructions are carried out, and disinfectants properly used.

In cases of Diphtheria, or suspicious throat disease, together with all contacts, and possible carriers; swabs have been taken, and sent to the County Health Laboratory for examination; and, pending the result of such examination, all doubtful cases are isolated. During the year 89 swabs were sent to the Laboratory for examination, in addition to those sent by Dr. Jones from patients in the hospital; of these, 17 were "positive," and 72 "negative." A good supply of fresh Anti-toxin is always kept on hand by me, and has been promptly distributed to the Medical Practitioners whenever required.

The printed notices required under the Infectious Diseases Act have been left with the parents or householder in all cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever. All children who have been exposed to infection have been excluded from School, and the Head Master or Mistress notified. After recovery or removal of the patient, thorough disinfection is carried out. Fumigation is done with the "Sanitas Fumigator."

Cases of Tuberculosis are notified weekly to the County Medical Officer of Health. Fresh cases are visited by your Inspectors, and the sanitary condition of the premises reported on. The County Tuberculosis Visitor sees the patient, and sends a report to me. If any defects in the house or surroundings are reported, I communicate with the Inspectors of Nuisances, who take steps to have them remedied. After death or removal, the premises are thoroughly disinfected. The room the patient has occupied is thoroughly sprayed with Izal, using a Mackenzie Spray; the wall paper, if any, is stripped off. After the spraying the walls are re-papered and the ceilings white-washed; articles of furniture, etc., are wiped over with cloths soaked in the Izal Solution.

**Epidemics.**—There have been none during the year.

## Sanitary Administration.

1—**Staff.**—The District is divided into two Sub-Districts, each of which is provided with an Inspector of Nuisances. Each Inspector furnishes a Monthly Report to the Council, and, at the end of the year, an Annual Report of the work done during the year. The substance of these Reports is included in the Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health.

2—**Hospital Accommodation** available for Infectious Diseases. It is quite impossible at this time to do anything towards providing a permanent Infectious Diseases Hospital. The emergency building in Coleford is still used as a temporary Isolation Hospital. This is opened, and Trained Nurses obtained whenever any case occurs which it is necessary to isolate away from home. The cases are most frequently either Scarlet Fever or Diphtheria. On one occasion some Diphtheria cases occurred which could not be isolated at home, at a time when the Hospital was already occupied by a Scarlet Fever case; on this occasion the Frome Urban Council very kindly allowed us the use of six beds in their Isolation Hospital.

The cases treated in Coleford Hospital during the year were six cases of Diphtheria; two Diphtheria Carriers; and one Scarlet Fever case. Three other cases of Diphtheria were treated in Frome Urban Isolation Hospital. There were no deaths among these cases.

3—**Adoptive Public Health Acts and Bye-Laws** in force in the District:—

- (a) Part III., P.H.A.A., 1890 (so far as applicable to Rural Districts).
- (b) Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.
- (c) Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Regulations.
- (d) Slaughter House Bye-Laws.
- (e) Temporary Relaxation of Building Bye-Laws, 1920, No. 2128 Order.

## Housing.

I.—**General Housing Conditions in the District:—**

1—**General Housing Conditions.**—The total number of Inhabited Houses in the District is approximately 2688. Of these, the number inhabited by the working classes is 2413. New houses for the working classes actually erected during the year consisted of four bungalows; one at Lipyeat; one at Highbury; and two at Staplemead.

2—(a) **Extent of Shortage or Excess of Houses.**—There is a shortage of houses in the District, especially in the mining area; this is most marked in the Coleford neighbourhood. There is also a shortage—





less marked—in the larger agricultural villages, as Beckington, Nunney, and Leigh-on-Mendip. In the smaller agricultural villages there is no shortage. In one parish—Marston Biggot—there might be said to be an excess, as there are a considerable number of empty houses in very fair condition, for which there does not appear to be any great local demand.

(b) Measures Taken or Contemplated to meet any Shortage.—As stated in my Annual Report for 1919, the Council decided on building 89 houses under the Housing Act, 1919, and sites, amounting to about 14 acres of land, were acquired in the parishes of Beckington, Buckland, Hemington, Kilmersdon, Leigh-on-Mendip, Mells, Nunney, and Rode; plans were also prepared and approved. During the present year 52 of these houses have been in course of erection, and were approaching completion at the end of the year. These 52 houses were situated as follows:—Mells, 24; Highbury (Coleford), 24; Haydon, 4. The remaining 37 will be commenced next spring.

3—Changes in Population during the Year.—There has been a natural increase, but no important change in the population of the District during the year; neither is any great change anticipated in the future.

## II.—Overcrowding :—

There were only two cases of Overcrowding reported this year, as compared with five last year. Of these, one at Beckington, was abated; the other was the case at Rudge left over from last year. This case is still in existence; all efforts to obtain larger quarters for the family having hitherto failed.

As to the conditions in the District as a whole, the estimated population being 10,704, this gives the average number of inhabitants per house as 3.9.

## III.—Fitness of Houses :—

1—(a) General Standard of Housing in the District.—In carrying out the Housing Inspection of the District, the Medical Officer of Health and the Sanitary Inspectors have divided defective houses into three classes:—1—Houses in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be absolutely unfit for human habitation. 2—Houses in a better condition than class 1; but which, if better houses were available into which to move the inhabitants, would still be condemned as unfit. 3—Houses not absolutely unfit, but below the general housing standard.

(b) General Character of the Defects found to exist in Unfit Houses.—The most frequent defect in unfit houses is *dampness*, which varies much in degree and may be either temporary or permanent. Temporary dampness from so-called “sweating” of stone floors or walls calls for no special treatment. Permanent dampness may be due to absence of a “damp course;” porous nature of stone of which the walls are built, or drainage from ground banked up against the walls; and, of course, such defects as cracks in the walls, or blocked or inadequate shuting. Next to dampness, perhaps the most frequent are *structural defects*, such as leaky roofs, cracked walls, rotten or broken floors, etc. Next come defects in lighting and ventilation, such as fixed windows, insufficient window space in bedrooms, etc. Lastly, *sanitary defects*, such as absence of, or defective sinks and drains for slop water.

2—General Action taken as regards Unfit Houses under (a) the Public Health Acts.—In four cases—two in each Sub-District—notice was served requiring defects to be remedied, and in every case the necessary work was carried out by the owner. In a large number of cases defects were remedied in consequence of informal action taken by the Sanitary Inspectors. No closing orders were made during the year.

(b) The Housing Acts.—No action was taken under these.

3—Difficulties in Remedying Unfitness, special measures taken or suggested.—As a rule there has been no difficulty in inducing owners to make necessary repairs and alterations, although delay has sometimes been caused by difficulty in obtaining materials or labour. In only a few cases has pressure by legal action been necessary.

4—Conditions, so far as they affect Housing, as regards Water Supply, etc.—The only item under this heading which calls for remark is that of the Mells Water Supply. The action taken by the Council in this matter has already been described under the heading “Water Supplies” (page 3).

## Appendices.—Housing Conditions.

Statistics for the 12 months ended 31st, December, 1920.

### 1.—General.

(1)—Estimated Population	...	...	...	...	10704
(2)—General Death Rate...	...	...	...	...	11.5
(3)—Death Rate from Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	0.09
(4)—Infantile Mortality	...	...	...	...	15 (rate of 63.02)



(5)—Number of Dwelling Houses of all Classes...	...	...	2688
(6)—Number of Working Class Dwelling Houses	...	...	2413
(7)—Number of Working Class erected ( <i>i.e.</i> , finished)	...	...	4
( <i>a</i> ) By Local Authority under Government Scheme	...	...	0
( <i>b</i> ) By Private Enterprise (subsidised or not)	...	...	4
New Houses in hand (January 1st, 1921), but not finished	...	...	89
( <i>a</i> ) Plans passed only	...	...	37
( <i>b</i> ) Building Commenced, but not completed	...	...	52

## 2.—Unfit Dwelling Houses.

### I.—Inspection.—

(1)—Total Number of Dwelling Houses inspected for Housing Defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	375
(2)—Number of Dwelling Houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910	...	...	1200
(3)—Number of Dwelling Houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...	0
(4)—Number of Dwelling Houses, relatively unfit, but allowed to be occupied until new houses built	...	...	85
(5)—Number of Dwelling Houses, not absolutely unfit, but below general housing standard	...	...	317

### II.—Action.—

(1)—Remedy of Defects without Service of Formal Notices.—				*
Number of Defective Dwelling Houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	...	...	...	56
(2)—Action under Statutory Powers.—				
( <i>a</i> ) Proceedings under Section 28 of the Housing Town Planning Act, 1919	...	...	...	None taken
( <i>b</i> ) Proceedings under the Public Health Acts	...	...	...	2
(1)—Number of Dwelling Houses in respect of which Notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	...	...	...	4
(2)—Number of Dwelling Houses in which defects were remedied.—				
( <i>a</i> ) By Owners	...	...	...	4
( <i>b</i> ) By Local Authority in default of Owners	...	...	...	0
( <i>c</i> ) Proceedings under Sections 17 & 18 of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, 1909	...	...	...	None taken
(3)—Staff engaged on Housing Work.—				
Staff engaged on the various duties connected with Housing Work consists of—				
1—Clerk.				
2—Architect.				
3—Clerk of the Works.				
4—The Sanitary Inspectors.				
5—The Medical Officer of Health.				

In conclusion, I beg to thank the Council and their Officers for the invariable courtesy I have received from them, and the great assistance they have rendered me in my work for the Public Health, and in the preparation of this Report.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

H. R. CODD, M.R.C.S., L.S.A.,

Medical Officer of Health to the Frome Rural District Council.

NUNNEY, FROME,  
February 28th, 1921.

FROM

Rural District Council.



# Annual Report

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

for the Year 1920.

*February 28th, 1921.*

FROM :

F. H. DYKE, PRINTER, CATHERINE STREET.